

IOWAccess Project 7 Team Meeting
IDED Conference Room, Des Moines
July 8, 1998, 10:00 a.m.

Meeting Summary

Members Present:

Phil Dunshee, Co-lead, IDED
Roger Halvorson, Co-lead, IDOC
Fran Amin, DNR
Linda King, IDED
Terry Martin, Association of Engineers
Ralph Wallace, DPH, for Mark Shoeberl

Staff:

Tamara Dukes, Iowa Interactive
Ann Hendricks, ACS
Kent Hiller, Iowa Interactive
Arlinda McKeen, SPPG
Linda Plazak, ITS
Matt Theobald, Iowa Interactive
Jeff Veverka, ACS

Guests:

Andrea Helbling, IDED
Elizabeth Henderson, IDED

Welcome and introductions by were conducted by co-lead Phil Dunshee.

"Bird Dog" Update

Dunshee recapped the project's need to establish a systematic procedure for gathering and updating information from those state agencies with business license information included in the project 7 database and incorporated in web application. There has not been an individual whose responsibility it is to make these contacts, gather the information, or establish protocols with other state agencies. The purpose of the protocols is to establish a clear understanding with IDED of how agencies with information in the project 7 database will respond to the customer. Dennis Guffey joined IDED staff on June 27 to fill this role and will be assisted by Andrea Helbling. Guffey will also have other specific IDED responsibilities, including volunteer promotion programs and empowerment area initiatives.

Elizabeth Henderson, chief regulatory assistance coordinator, will fill an expanded role to lead the business license team. This set of individuals represent the human resources component of the solution to the sustainability issue for project 7.

Project 7 Status

Jeff Veverka from ACS provided a report on ACS's work in transitioning the project to Iowa Interactive for the web development. ACS is finishing production and loading information into the database. The various information gathered from state agencies has been loaded into the database, reviewed for correctness, and checked for whether it remained intact when manipulated by the system. The testing phase will ensure the product fits the functional need of users, and errors in code will be fixed. Information has been added on regulations for 35 DNR permits and 18 professional licenses from seven boards. Not all the information has been received from Dept. of Commerce due to heavy workload related to renewal schedules; Heidi Belding will enter that as it comes in.

ACS is installing a beta version on some additional PCs at IDED so other staff can play with the system to give it a trial. It is evident where some of the information is missing – e.g. missing e-mail addresses for each agency for each license. Using the system and identifying the gaps will serve as the basis for developing the bird dog work plan. The starting point of that work plan is to take information already in the system and document protocols for the agencies from whom information is already in place. This will establish a pattern to get correct data in the right format and make it easier to approach the agencies with no information in the system yet.

The professional licensing portion of the project was discussed, specifically related to the digital signature question. Since the digital signature law failed to pass, there has been some confusion about the status of this part the project. Dunshee's perception is that there will be a hook in the system to link in the digital signature and electronic renewal. A detailed discussion of the professional licensing portion ensued.

Veverka -- Initially, ACS asked what would and would not be part of ACS responsibilities for Web development. In December or January it was determined that Project 1 would supply web development to keep the web piece with the same look and feel as the rest of the site. The project 1 contractor would have greater expertise in this area; the team decided it would be part of project 1.

In conversations with Halvorson, Department of Commerce staff and professional licensing component would be introduced to the project 1 contractor as soon as possible after the contractor was on board. When the

digital signature legislation did not pass, the question arose whether to continue with this component.

Halvorson -- We needed to define parameters so it could go forward under the changed circumstance of not having a digital signature law.

ACS is developing a database as a repository that is located on a SQL server at IDED.

Hiller -- Professional licensing is on a mainframe at ITS. The application to process renewals is a separate development effort. The issues are signature and payment issues. If we need to have a December deadline met for online renewal, there are only 100 days, including weekends, and while it is possible to do this, the time is a large barrier. Iowa Interactive has a concern with getting this separate effort onto an already-packed plate in time.

Electronic payments are doable, but this compounds the level of work. Doing credit cards is an entire additional set of tasks requiring working with banks, etc. Can this part even be done with the signature issue still unresolved?

Plazak -- The credit card component was not originally part of the project.

Halvorson -- While that was not discussed, it seems logical that electronic payment goes along with electronic renewal.

Veverka -- The original work plan did define the professional licensing part as a portion of the web design. In discussion with Roger Hanson at Dept. of Commerce, we learned that their system could not handle electronic payments, and suggested an electronic e-mail to DOC could serve as an alternative.

Plazak -- I provided inaccurate information to Hiller. I believed that Dept. of Commerce would convert from mainframe to server application. This has not occurred for whatever reason. This means we have a different platform than we thought we were working from.

Veverka -- When it was decided the web piece would be developed by Iowa Interactive, that was a different aspect and that analysis would be done by the web developers. ACS didn't want to duplicate efforts when Iowa Interactive had done similar things before. It was then determined that this was not part of ACS tasks.

Halvorson -- Was told the BLIC and regulatory guide was ACS responsibility, and they would hand off professional licensing to project 1 contractor.

Veverka – There were several discussions on what can be done for the web side by ACS. It was always the goal to get the project 1 contractor introduced as early as possible. This just happened the beginning of July because of Iowa Interactive issues with their contract and their start-up operations.

Plazak – We can still get some portion of this completed regardless of the digital signature. Concern about going into a credit card situation where it was not secure; we need to be sure we have all the planning done and issues taken care of so that we don't risk lowAccess' reputation in case of a problem with security.

Dunshee – We could look at this as two parallel tracks – the business license database that would eventually have web link and the professional licensing. It seems the scale of the professional licensing track is larger than previously thought. Should this become a separate "project 7b?"

Dukes – from a marketing standpoint, unless there can be wholly-used program, users won't want it – they won't want to use Internet for part of it and then fax in a signature or mail in a check. Suggest getting lawyers to look at an entire package to see if it is required to have signatures.

Dunshee -- Want to build something that will meet business needs, need to work with Dept. of Commerce to identify what is needed – use the attorneys later.

Hiller – As developer, there is a need to know if digital signature needs to be a part. First question is whether there needs to be a signature according to law. Sometimes it may not be required.

Dunshee – Is this so big we're needing to get another budget?

Hiller – This is a part of Project 1, so there is no bill from Iowa Interactive for this part.

King – There are other issues. What is the scope of the other background work? Does the information go to the ITS mainframe? Are there other agencies that need to be fed with data?

Hiller -- System is about 15 years old – has had a number of developers working on it, so understanding what has been built into this system add tasks – this again is a time issue. It is a logistical issue with other projects and priorities.

Plazak – We definitely need a professional license system by December to use in the pilot. I assumed there was a transfer to a server system, which isn't happening.

Halvorson – what keeps this from happening is funding. We need about \$25,000 which we don't have.

Martin – If users will be comfortable with an Internet application, they won't want to do a two-step process. They will want to do the whole renewal on the Internet and not have to fax or mail anything in.

Halvorson – December renewal for the engineers does not require a signature. The realtors renewal does require a signature. Department of Commerce presently receives credit cards for payment. Usage of that service increased 100% in each of three years it has been offered. If people use a credit card, they will want to use it online, too. The Maryland model is good. If we're going to have a demonstration project, it needs to be a complete project. This creates a problem on the payment end.

Hiller – It is not a problem structurally. The problem is timing; and there is a lawyer issue on whether Iowa Interactive can do this as extension of the ITS contract. I don't know if ITS is allowed to do processing of credit cards. It may need to be structured as going through DOC. Kent is looking into the issue through private counsel opinion.

Dunshee – There is an expectation of a deliverable for professional licensing.

Martin – There is a need to sign off on continuing education as part of the renewal process.

Halvorson – Has a call in to the Attorney General's office to find out if the signature is required. It is not required by law, and may be changeable quickly through rules. The basic renewal application for engineering doesn't require signature.

Hiller – A key decision point is whether to migrate it off a mainframe to a server. Then ACS would be a good contractor on the server side.

Dunshee – What is the bottom line deliverable in December? The right thing to do would be focus on doing all the things we need to do for the long term and big picture – overriding the one December deliverable. We would shift to a server-based system, then build the connection to the existing database with the BLIC system. We assume we would deal with the need for money later. We would develop the design for the entire system, even if it's bigger and takes longer.

Plazak – Issues are time and money. Project 7 has \$10,000 unobligated now. I would rather have a great project, but we are stuck with a short time frame and the expectation. The transfer to the server from the mainframe is the issue that created this hurdle.

Hiller – We could scale the project down – put the engineering renewal component on a server to develop this part for the pilot.

Dunshee – Consider this hypothetical scenario: engineering is a doable size, has fewer hurdles. Is it possible to build the engineering renewal system on the SQL server used for BLIC? Then build a web interface to do the December renewal. Long term goal over the fiscal year would be to get a full-fledged server installed and that part developed. Then the engineering part would be moved to the Department of Commerce professional licensing server.

Hendricks – Propose analysis over the next couple weeks to see what the bigger picture is in order to see what will change.

Hiller – In ideal world, that would be the best avenue; we don't have the time.

Veverka -- We need to examine what putting the engineering component on the BLIC server will do to the existing server. Is it possible to use an e-mail application as a proof of concept? If it can capture necessary information and send in secure e-mail, it fits with their process – though it ends up as a paper process. Public perception is the web interface. What happens behind the scenes in Commerce will be changing anyway as their processes are changing.

Plazak – How do we pay for getting this part into a server format.

Veverka – Anticipate it may take more time to get this to a server. Need to have an application that DOC goes through – have to understand and implement that to make this work. The process to develop this with the agency is more lengthy than the technology part of it. Deliverable is proof of concept of electronic renewal.

Plazak – This piece should be as good as the BLIC piece and it is not. We have a commitment to the federal funders to do it.

Hiller – Suggest we pursue interfacing with the mainframe on the engineering portion only, and deal with continuing ed as step 2. We will figure out how to deal with payment. Iowa Interactive may need to contract

with Commerce to do electronic payment. Iowa Interactive will make a priority of resources to get this done.

Halvorson – Bruce Ireland with DOC administrative services is the engineering contact.

Wallace – Need to find out how credit card payment is handled; at DPH it is handled in a different system.

Linda will verify that delivering on the engineering renewal portion will satisfy the federal funders.

Dunshee – It has only been a couple of months since the legislature adjourned. What exists within the BLIC side will also be substantive enough that it will demonstrate that the system is going forward. Significant follow on work will need to occur to transition this to server based system and build mechanisms and protocols.

Martin – To separate continuing education may not be possible.

Halvorson – The signature may only be required because of practice. If it is required in rules, we are still within the time frame for change. The code doesn't require a signature.

Halvorson will check on this.

Wallace – In many cases, if you have a signature on file on the original application, you only need that signature one time. Audit process assures that is accurate.

The team reached consensus on action regarding developing the professional licensing renewal component:

Department of Commerce will review the required business procedures and requirements for signatures. They will work closely with Iowa Interactive throughout. The engineering license renewal component will be developed for use during the December renewal process. It will use the mainframe at ITS and incorporate credit card payment.

There will be a link from the BLIC to the engineering license renewal process through the current application through a web address completed by Iowa Interactive.

Dunshee requested that there be a determination within 2 – 3 weeks of what the work involves in scope, budget, and time frame. At this point,

Halvorson will initiate a meeting including Plazak, McKeen, Dunshee, Halvorson, and Hiller.

Plazak will ensure this is acceptable to the funders.

Iowa Interactive Update

Iowa Interactive has established connectivity with the server. They still need to build the page, and will create an IDED-looking page to host the BLIC.

Developing Evaluation Criteria

McKeen outlined the need for evaluation criteria to include in the project's final report. Three criteria common to all lowAccess projects have been identified, and others may be forthcoming from the Steering Committee. The focus is on evaluating the process to help others who may do these kinds of projects. The three common criteria already stipulated address methods to involve citizens, methods to promote availability or existence of the project, and methods to reduce barriers to citizen use. Attention should also be given to the level of intergovernmental involvement.

Plazak commented that the evaluation needs to be complete by Sept. 30, with the final report complete shortly thereafter.

There is a need to develop a means to identify criteria and gather input from other team members. Dunshee suggested the chairs and staff draft a memorandum regarding preliminary thoughts and draft criteria, and then call on several members to talk over phone to get more in-depth input.

Several thoughts on criteria were offered by the team.

1. Procedures for communication in intergovernmental effort.
2. Engaging other levels of government.
3. Was there enough work done on grant design up front? Was there a critical path chart done that helped guide through the process?
4. More people needed to be involved up front; things changed a lot.
5. Administrative rules and legislation.
6. Underestimation of the difficulty of the non-technology pieces and communication to team.
7. Biggest headache – not having project 1.
8. Extra time involved by having lots of agencies involved – financial and getting the work done.
9. Having definite priorities in place to aid in selecting the projects.
10. Two sides to the coin to how difficult it is to work intergovernmentally – it is not the most efficient way to do business to work collaboratively. “Cult of collaboration.”

Presentation at Steering Committee on July 9

Dunshee and Halvorson are preparing to present an update on the project to the Steering Committee on July 9. Dennis Guffey will be present to be introduced to group as the "bird dog." The current budget sheet shows that \$10,170 remains of \$190,000 budgeted for the project. [Note: More current figures showed overspending by \$1,930. IDED will cover the cost overruns.] An oral report will be given on the status of the project, budget, evaluation, and sustainability. Leads will report the professional licensing part will be forthcoming on scaled-down version with a future hope for expansion.

The meeting adjourned at noon.